

REMARKS

The amendment of Figure 10 of the Drawings is presented for the purpose of conforming the Drawings to the requirements of 37 CFR 1.84(h)(3). The amendments to the claims are presented for the purpose of correcting minor typographical, grammatical, and/or spelling errors and to provide consistency of terms used in the claims. The amendments to the specification are presented to make the terms used in the written description consistent with the amended claims. No new matter is added by the amendments to the application.

Claims 1, 8, 12, 19, 23, and 30 are allowed. The Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider the rejections of the non-allowed claims set forth in the Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

The Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings because the sectional view identified in Figure 5 was not properly identified in the drawing figure from which it was taken. The sectional view illustrated in Figure 5 is for the embodiment illustrated in Figure 10. Figure 10 has been amended to show the section line in accordance with 37 CFR 1.84(h)(3). Accordingly, it is believed that the objection to the drawings is overcome.

35 USC 112, Second Paragraph: Claims 2-7, 9-11, 13-18, 20-22, 24-29, and 31-44

The Examiner rejected Claims 2-7, 9-11, 13-18, 20-22, 24-29, and 31-44 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. In making the rejection, the Examiner cited several instances where terms in the claims were not used consistently, appeared to be vague, or were misspelled. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The terms objected to by the Examiner are not so vague as to render the claimed subject matter undeterminable. Instead, the objections appear to relate to inconsistent use of certain terms and an obvious misspelling of another term. The essential inquiry pertaining to this requirement is whether the claims set out and circumscribe a particular subject matter with a reasonable degree of clarity and particularity. The

definiteness of claim language should not be analyzed in a vacuum. Rather, it should be considered in light of the content of the particular application disclosure, the teachings of the prior art; and the claim interpretation that would be given by one possessing the ordinary level of skill in the pertinent art at the time the invention was made. *MPEP* §2173.02. While it is possible that inconsistent use of terms, misspelled terms, and lack of proper antecedent can lead to a lack of clarity or precision in a claim, the presence of such terms does not *per se* render a claim unpatentable under the second paragraph of Section 112.

For example, the Examiner asserted that the term “tongue-like” in Claim 2 rendered that claim indefinite because the term can be interpreted to include features not-actually disclosed. The definition of the combinational form “-like” means “resembling or characteristic of”. *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition* (1994). An embodiment of the tongue-like pieces set forth in Claim 2 as originally filed are shown in Figures 3 and 4 and described at page 9 of the Specification. In view of the clear description in the application, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not have any trouble determining the meaning or scope of “tongue-like” pieces in the context of the Applicant’s claimed invention. Similar arguments apply for the other terms specifically referred to by the Examiner.

Nevertheless, in order to expedite the handling of this application, Applicant has amended Claims 2, 6, 7, and 34-44 to correct the informalities identified by the Examiner in those claims.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims are in condition for allowance. The Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider the application in the light of the amendments and remarks presented hereinabove.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure: Figure 10 replacement sheet

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Amendments to the Drawings

Please amend the drawings by replacing the sheet containing Figure 10 with the replacement sheet enclosed herewith.